

**FINAL**

MINUTES  
MINUTEMAN REGIONAL VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 14, 2021      6:30 P.M.  
VIA REMOTE PARTICIPATION

Present:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton)

Dave O'Connor (Bolton)

Ford Spalding (Dover)

Alice DeLuca, Secretary (Stow)

Michael Ruderman (Arlington)

Steve LeDoux (Concord)

Jeff Stulin, Vice-Chair (Needham)

Absent: Judy Crocker (Lexington)

Jennifer Leone (Lancaster)

Weighted Vote: Weighted Vote present at start of meeting: 73.66%

Others Present: Dr. Edward Bouquillon, Dr. Amy Perreault, Anthony Chiariello, Katie Bouchard, and Julia Pisegna

1. CALL TO ORDER: OPEN SESSION

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

2. ADOPTION OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION

VOTE: To adopt remote participation by all members of the Minuteman School Committee pursuant to and in accordance with Sections (2) and (3) of the Executive Order Suspending Certain Provisions of the Open Meeting Law made by the Governor of Massachusetts on March 12, 2020, such adoption to be effective until said Executive Order is rescinded or the Commonwealth's State of Emergency as referenced in said Executive Order, is terminated, whichever happens first.

ACTION 2021 #175

Moved (DeLuca) and seconded (O'Connor)

To approve remote participation

VOTE: 7 members in room at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 73.66%

Weight needed: > 36.83%

Names of towns opposing or abstaining: none

Final percentage results of vote: 73.66%

Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse (Acton) (Yes)  
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)  
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)  
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)  
Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)  
Jeff Stulin, Vice-Chair (Needham) (Yes)  
Alice DeLuca, Secretary (Stow) (Yes)

3. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

4. Chair's Report: FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORGANIZATION, *Pam Nourse*

Committee Chair, Pam Nourse, provided a list of members for the various subcommittees in the packet. She noted the one change is the addition of the Superintendent Screening Committee which includes those School Committee members who were voted on at the last School Committee meeting.

She added that since she did not receive any changes to these various subcommittees, all committees will move forward this year in maintaining stability with all of the same membership. She asked that if anyone did need to change their assignment, please let her know.

Ms. Nourse asked Committee members to note the additional School Committee meeting that will be scheduled for Thursday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>. Mr. Spalding added that it will be a very quick 10–15-minute meeting.

5. PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

a. Summer School 2021 Overview – Katie Bouchard

Dr. Bouquillon noted that in the absence of Mr. Clement, a variety of people will be reporting on the topics for the Principal's Report.

Katie Bouchard, Director of CTE, provided members with an update on summer school. She reported that in addition to summer school, Minuteman offered summer programming with over 198 students participating. The programs consisted of 10 academic classes which included 48 students. The five CTE classes included 30 students participating. Twelve students participated in the social/emotional wellness week, and 108 incoming freshmen participated in the Introduction to the Revolution Week.

She noted that all the summer programming was funded through grants they had applied for throughout the school year, and these provided us enough money to offer all those programs.

Ms. Bouchard hopes to expand the offerings next summer as we continue to focus on Minuteman students and their needs, and as COVID restrictions lighten up, allow us to include these programs to community members as we have done in the past.

b. Opening of School – Fall 2021

Anthony Chiariello, Assistant Principal, reported that the opening of school is off to a good start, including the usual ups and downs, but overall, it has been great. He shared that the incredible buzz and energy in the school has returned and it is very exciting to see students connecting with one another once again.

Mr. Chiariello reported that the current enrollment is 659 students, and he noted that the freshman class has completed their lighting round of exploratory which has made for an exciting week. He highlighted that he witnessed teachers being excited talking to students about their programs and the different opportunities that exist for them at Minuteman, and teachers stepping up helping whenever they are needed as they always do. He shared that it is great to see the return to what makes coming to school and being a high school student really special. The transportation situation has been really challenging.

Mr. Stulin shared that the main take-away at his school is that the students all wearing masks and happy to be back and asked if that was the same take-away at Minuteman. Mr. Chiariello agreed and commented that there have been no real issues with wearing masks.

c. Enrollment Update

Mr. Chiariello reported that the current enrollment is 659 students.

Mr. Chiariello added that the freshman class is the largest class with 200 students, and it is exactly where we expected it to be. In looking at attendance daily, he monitors for any students that have not shown up or have been missing days which would potentially indicate that they would not be staying, but that has not been the case and there are no students who fall into that category.

The sophomore class has held relatively steady, though there may be additional transfers coming in, but otherwise, we are where we expected the sophomore class to be at this time.

He remarked that the admissions process has begun, and we are now accepting applications, and without any marketing being done at this point, applications have already begun to come in. He shared that a new admissions brochure includes more details on the whole school experience, in addition to the career technical programs, and gives a full view of what is possible at Minuteman. Mr. O'Brien put together an alumni and current students' brochure which highlights the impact of both what students do while they are here, as well as their accomplishment beyond Minuteman. There are additional brochures and marketing materials which are in process at this time and will be arriving at local homes within a week or two.

He also added that planning has begun for Showcase Day and Open House which will be held mid-November, and he plans for the best with regards to the health and safety precautions which may or may not be needed at that time, as well as if school districts will be hosting field trips to Minuteman. School presentation scheduling has begun, whether virtual or in-person, and varies with what school districts will allow at this time. He is looking forward to the season, and to meeting the class of 2026.

Ms. Nourse asked whether the changes in the state admissions guidelines will impact the regular ongoing recruitment activities. Mr. Chiariello does not believe so due to the fact that the regulations help us a little bit as they require schools either to provide us with family email addresses, or that the school will email information for us in the event that they have a policy which does not allow us to access the email addresses, though most districts provided the family addresses to us.

Mr. Chiariello added that there is a CVTE Equity Grant that we will be applying for, and those funds will be utilized to translate our marketing materials to break down the awareness gap for families whose first language is not English so that everyone in every community in our member towns is aware of what Minuteman has to offer. We will also be with partnering with the community groups in our member towns. He does not see any of the guidelines having any kind of negative impact on our recruitment.

Mr. O'Connor asked for confirmation that the school was originally designed, based on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's recommendation, for 654 students. Dr. Bouquillon confirmed that it was built for 628 students, and we are currently at 659 students and there are still restrictions and space requirements in place due to COVID. He inquired how that affects us regarding capacity, and secondly, with regards to recruitment, what does it look like relative to the pipeline and waitlist and/or reconfiguration of the school to accommodate additional students.

Mr. Chiariello deferred to Dr. Bouquillon for the capacity piece but noted that in terms of the pipeline and reported that right now for member towns, there is no waiting list. There is a non-member town waiting list which can be accessed if needed, but if another member town student applied, they would have priority to the seats, and that is where we stand currently in terms of the pipeline.

Dr. Bouquillon added that the requirements of social distancing are less than what they were a year ago and noted that we have not had a problem on the vocational side accommodating the current enrollment that we have. He then added that looking forward as the freshman class begins to choose their shops, that may change as they have completed their first round of exploratory and will now spend time in five shops, four shops for two weeks and one shop for one week, and then students will make their decision in January. At that time, we will see how things will filter out. He shared that one shop he is concerned about is metal fabrication and welding and that we do not have the capacity for all interested students, so we are beginning the plan to expand that shop into the foundation footprint of the north foundation that we had built, which would help us accommodate a normal number, 12-15 students, in the metal fabrication area. He noted that, beyond that for a class of 200 for 2026, under the social distancing we would have problems, but assuming we do not have that a year from now, our pinch point there is for academic space and he will continue to address that with the School Committee and School Building Committee as the year progresses in terms of completing the north building and the renovations for the Animal Science Program and additional classrooms at the former Tremont School.

d. Transportation – Update and challenges

Dr. Bouquillon shared that due the lack of bus drivers, the Governor has deployed the National Guard to drive the smaller vehicles, some of the same vehicles that Minuteman teachers use to transport students to sports.

He added that over 200 students are participating in fall sports this year, including the golf team. The golf team competes against Greater Lowell Vocational High School whose home golf course closed. They made arrangements with Sky Meadow Country Club, which is only a few miles from the school, but is over the line into New Hampshire, and therefore for our students to participate in these matches with Greater Lowell, pursuant to Student Travel Policy JJA, a vote is needed by the School Committee to allow students to travel to another state for their competitions. He respectfully asked for a motion by the School Committee to approve the Minuteman Golf Team to travel to league contests to Sky Meadow Golf Course in Nashua, New Hampshire.

ACTION 2021 #176

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (O'Connor)

To approve the Minuteman Golf Team to travel to league contests to Sky Meadow Golf Course in Nashua, New Hampshire

VOTE: 7 members in room at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 73.66%

Weight needed: > 36.83%

Names of towns opposing or abstaining: none

Final percentage results of vote: 73.66%

Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse (Acton) (Yes)

Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)

Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)

Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)

Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)

Jeff Stulin, Vice-Chair (Needham) (Yes)

Alice DeLuca, Secretary (Stow) (Yes)

Dr. Bouquillon reported that on other transportation issues, with the new contractor, NRT Transportation, there has been a couple of issues with some runs to Lexington and Lancaster where adjustments needed to be made. An email was sent to all families reminding them to let us know what their issues are so that adjustments can be made. Dr. Bouquillon was informed that NRT Transportation is currently interviewing 50 potential bus drivers, and he does not believe that the driver shortage will be a continuing issue, but it is a current issue that is being dealt with on a day-by-day basis between Brian Tildsley, Assistant Principal, and NRT Transportation. He shared that at this point in time, he has not had to be directly involved with Mr. McCarthy of NRT, but he may need to within the next few days.

He also added that he is looking at other vendors, which is appropriate, that might be available to fill any gaps that may persist for a few days. While he is hoping that he does not need to do that, he is making initial inquiries, including to our former vendor of transportation which is in Lexington.

Mr. Stulin shared that he is very grateful for all the time and efforts of the administration in working to resolve critical and challenging issues such as transportation which many other communities are facing at this time. He hopes that the issues are resolved soon.

e. Staffing Report – *Dr. Amy Perreault*

Dr. Perreault provided an update on the hiring season which began in the spring. Since that time, 19 positions have been posted, 65 interviews have been scheduled, 60 interviews have been held, 13 offers of employment were offered and subsequently declined, 5 offers of employment which were accepted and then subsequently declined or we never heard back from the individual.

She discussed the term “ghosting” and said that some applicants have come in and showed sincere interest during the process, and then we never hear back from them. She noted that it has been very challenging, as well as time consuming as we continued to do reference checks and created offers of employment.

We currently stand at 5 openings left to fill, three of which are short-term/long-term substitute positions for staff that are out on leave with plans to return. She shared that the people who they have hired are wonderful. These include at least three former Minuteman students; it is so wonderful and rewarding to see them return and give back to the Minuteman community.

Mr. Ruderman asked what subjects the two open positions were for, and Dr. Perreault replied that one position is for a technical assistant and the other is for a technical assistant/paraprofessional role, as well as the logistics/robotics teacher position.

Ms. DeLuca shared that one of the things that we do not know about the 2018 pandemic is the impact on the supply chain and employment, and we never hear or read about what happened 2, 3, 5 years after that time. She wonders if we can somehow collect the information and learn about the impact of this pandemic on us as it is a real opportunity to know what must be done when something of this magnitude happens again. Dr. Bouquillon thought this would be a great article for someone who is going to retire in the next couple of years to write.

Ms. Nourse recognized the amount of time and effort taken for these 65 interviews. Dr. Bouquillon shared that the interviews were by zoom, but there has never been anything like this.

Mr. O'Connor shared that they are seeing the same kind of behaviors with applicants in the corporate world, with people not following up. He thinks it is pandemic-related and thanked the staff for sticking it out and finding the right individuals.

## 6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Bouquillon provided members in their packet, pursuant to Ch. 716 Sec. 59, a copy of the job description and resume for the position of Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Operations and asked the School Committee for a vote to officially appoint Rich Ikonen for that position.

Mr. Spalding added that he has worked with Mr. Ikonen since he arrived at Minuteman, mainly through the building process and his work with facilities, and shared that he is an extraordinary, very talented and loyal person, and that hours do not seem to matter to him considering his arrival time at school each day. He said it is a great appointment and we are very fortunate to have Mr. Ikonen on board.

Ms. Nourse commented that Mr. Ikonen has quite the portfolio, and Mr. Ikonen shared that he has been in both the corporate ladder and in education, and he is happy where he is right now.

### ACTION 2021 #177

Moved (DeLuca) and seconded (Ledoux),

To approve the appointment of Rich Ikonen as Assistant Superintendent of Facilities and Operations

VOTE: 7 members in room at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 73.66%

Weight needed: > 36.83%

Names of towns opposing or abstaining:

Final percentage results of vote: 73.66%

Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton) (Yes)  
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)  
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)  
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)  
Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)  
Jeff Stulin (Needham) (Yes)  
Alice DeLuca (Stow) (Yes)

b. School Building Committee Report

Mr. Spalding reported that there is a delay in the supply chain for the turf for the fields, and that he hopes the stadium field will be completed by the end of October, with completion of the baseball and softball fields by the end of November.

Dr. Bouquillon shared that he anticipates having the first game on the new field for homecoming which is scheduled for Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

He added that he hopes to have the outfield of the baseball field, which is a dual-purpose field available for the soccer teams, completed in early November, or perhaps even late October, though he mentioned that events were not scheduled as he is somewhat skeptical about some of the completion dates.

Dr. Bouquillon hopes to host the traditional Thanksgiving Day game, which was in the past with Mystic Valley Regional. Many School Committee members and alumni attend that game. Mystic Valley no longer has a football team so this year we will host a new Thanksgiving Day rival, and while it is premature to announce the team, he shared that it will be a fun event.

Mr. Spalding added that weather permitting, the track will be in place within the next couple of days and will have a two-week waiting period before it can be used. Dr. Bouquillon commented that the project remains under budget. There is a School Building Committee meeting scheduled for Monday, September 20<sup>th</sup>.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Superintendent Screening Committee – Ford Spalding

Mr. Spalding shared that the four documents have been completed and thanked Ms. DeLuca, Ms. Nourse, Mr. Koocher and Mr. O'Brien for their work. These documents will then be sent to the members of the Screening Committee for their recommendations, then to the School Committee and explained that is the reason for the extra School Committee meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. After that, we anticipate posting the advertisement after the first of October, which is the goal of the Committee and keeps them on schedule.

He noted that the first meeting of the Screening Committee is scheduled for September 21<sup>st</sup> which will include a tour of the campus, followed by a business meeting which will be an orientation and committee process for the screening process. He is hopeful that it will be 100% in-person attendance, which he feels is important so that members get to know each other. After that meeting, he anticipates the rest of the meetings will be held via Zoom. But for this meeting, we need to get to know each other, and the members need to get to know the school.

b. Policy Subcommittee

Ms. DeLuca shared that the members have been busy doing boiler plate work in anticipation of things that might happen which we cannot control, such as requirements from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. They will still be bringing forward to the School Committee Section B which is the section of the Policy Manual that includes all the legal agreements between things which need to agree with each other so that there are no conflicts in the documents. She and noted that they are ready to go for any new policies that may arise which they are not anticipating.

Dr. Bouquillon added that they have been looking at a staff vaccination policy which has also been discussed with the union leadership. He noted that we are all on the same page in making Minuteman as safe as we can for staff and students. He noted that with this changing environment relative to mandates, policies, and recommendations, it makes sense to wait a little bit.

Dr. Bouquillon added that the Test-and-Stay Program through the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is in the final stages of planning. The program is geared towards students who may be showing signs can be tested at school and stay at school because we all know that we need to do whatever we can to keep everyone in school as safe as we possibly can, and sometimes it is wiser just to take things a little bit slower. Once we are ready and know what we need to do, policy- and procedure-wise. We have approximately 86% of our students fully vaccinated, which is high compared to all our nine member towns, and we will rely on that number to continue to increase. He also anticipates something from the Governor and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and he shared that he appreciates the work of the Policy Subcommittee and the great cooperation and communication between the administration and the union leadership.

Ms. DeLuca added that the other subject which they have been discussing has to do with admissions and we continue to wait for further information but noted that the nitty-gritty language takes a lot of time. Dr. Perreault and Mr. O'Brien have put together boiler plate materials from other districts so that we can review them and bring forward a well-thought out policy, followed by approval of the School Committee.

Mr. Stulin commented that he has seen all the pivoting that is necessary to maintain a safe teaching environment, despite all the pressures and conflicting feelings on COVID and masking, and he remains extremely happy with the approach that Minuteman has taken, and he supports it 100%, both last year which turned out extremely well, and what has been done so far this year despite some pushback. He recognized the challenging decisions that are being made on a weekly basis in dealing with this ongoing emergency.

Ms. Nourse also thanked the Committee, administration, faculty, and staff for all their hard work in putting this puzzle together.

9. SECRETARY'S REPORT, Alice DeLuca

a. Approval of Draft Minutes of July 6, 2021

Ms. DeLuca noted that amended draft minutes of the meeting held on July 6<sup>th</sup> were provided to members prior to the meeting.

ACTION 2021 #178

Moved (Stulin) and seconded (Spalding),

To approve the draft minutes of July 6, 2021, as presented

VOTE: 7 members in room at time of vote

Weighted Vote present: 66.51%



Weight needed: > 33.25%  
Names of towns opposing or abstaining: Bolton  
Final percentage results of vote: 66.51%  
Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton) (Yes)  
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)  
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Abstained)  
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)  
Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)  
Jeff Stulin (Needham) (Yes)  
Alice DeLuca (Stow) (Yes)

Ms. DeLuca presented the draft minutes of August 31, 2021, as presented in the original School Committee packet.

Mr. Ruderman was grateful for the attention to detail in the minutes, and Ms. DeLuca thanked Julia Pisegna for her work.

ACTION 2021 #179

Moved (Stulin) and seconded (Spalding),  
To approve the draft minutes of August 31, 2021, as presented

VOTE: 7 members in room at time of vote  
Weighted Vote present: 73.66%  
Weight needed: > 36.83%  
Names of towns opposing or abstaining:  
Final percentage results of vote: 73.66%  
Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton) (Yes)  
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)  
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)  
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)  
Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)  
Jeff Stulin (Needham) (Yes)  
Alice DeLuca (Stow) (Yes)

Committee Chair reminded members that the next School Committee meeting is scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup>.

10. ADJOURNMENT

ACTION 2021 #180

Moved (Spalding) and seconded (Ledoux),  
To adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

VOTE: 7 members in room at time of vote  
Weighted Vote present: 73.66%  
Weight needed: > 36.83%  
Names of towns opposing or abstaining:  
Final percentage results of vote: 73.66%  
Final status of the vote: Unanimous

Roll Call:

Pam Nourse, Chair (Acton) (Yes)  
Michael Ruderman (Arlington) (Yes)  
Dave O'Connor (Bolton) (Yes)  
Steve LeDoux (Concord) (Yes)  
Ford Spalding (Dover) (Yes)  
Jeff Stulin (Needham) (Yes)  
Alice DeLuca (Stow) (Yes)

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Pisegna  
District Assistant

Alice DeLuca  
Secretary